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ABSTRACT

A central system to organize teacher-made instructional materials for adult basic education/general educational development programs has a number of advantages. These include lower reproduction costs, encouragement of teacher planning in advance, encouragement of creativity and use of teacher synthesizing/writing skills, rapid orientation of teachers regarding appropriate materials, and encouragement of sharing with the faculty/staff. Incentives for teacher use are that the system is easy to use, not time consuming, available and accessible whenever the college is open, and has original materials appropriate to the students' level. The system at William Rainey Harper College (Illinois) is organized into the three broad areas of reading, English, and mathematics. Each area is set up by major skills or content areas. Of the three general content areas, the English writing skills area is used to the greatest extent, then mathematics, and finally reading. (More detailed information on organization is provided.) Maintenance depends upon the general cooperation of the teaching staff and upon one individual who oversees other needs of the system. (Responsibilities and other roles of the Materials Specialist are discussed. Appendixes include complete lists of major file headings and materials selection criteria.) (YLB)

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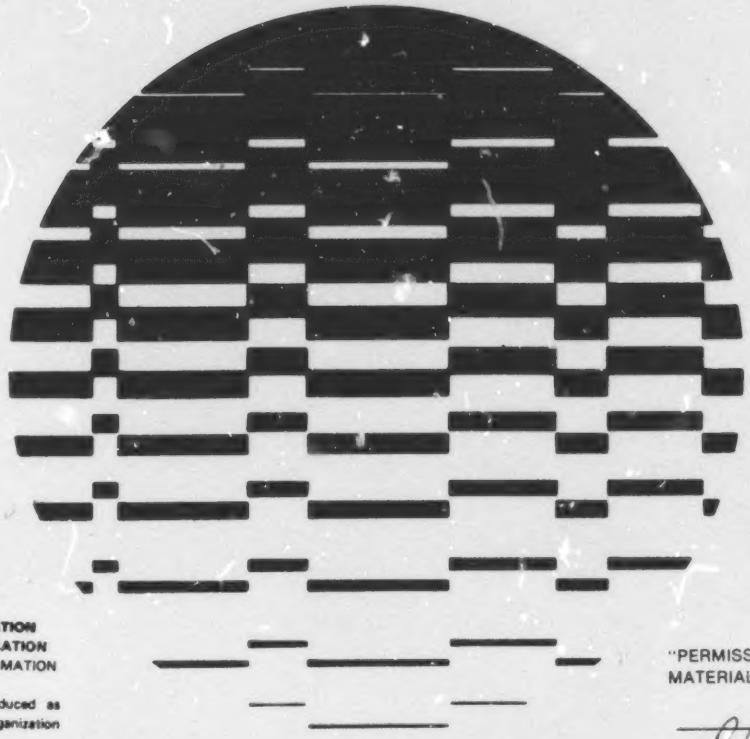

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"A System for Teacher-Made ABE/GED Materials"

by Patricia Mulcrone

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A System for Teacher-Made ABE/GED Materials

Patricia Mulcrone

Many adult basic/secondary programs encourage the use of teacher-made instructional materials to supplement the many commercial ABE/GED materials available, to provide variety in class activities, to accomplish program-specific goals, or to individualize instruction according to students' needs. If use of these materials proves successful, the program may wish to organize these materials into a central system that has been shown to have a number of advantages.

Such a system exists with the General Education Development (GED) Department at William Rainey Harper College. (The GED Department includes programs in basic Skills, Pre-GED, and GED instruction.) The system reflects materials appropriate for ten curriculum options (three levels each of reading, writing, and mathematical skills plus a course in citizenship training). The basic concept of the system has existed in the department for over eight years. Gradually, however, the system has been enlarged and refined to reflect program changes and improvements; and responsibility for the system has been delegated to a particular staff member.

If such a system is to be successful, there are a number of requisite considerations. The purpose of this paper is to describe advantages of the system, some areas of caution, incentives for teacher use, extent of teacher use, specific organization of the system, its ongoing maintenance, and a system for revising the system as necessary.

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Advantages of the System

A central teacher-made materials system must possess a number of advantages in order to justify the staff time it takes to initially organize and then maintain the system. One primary advantage is that use of materials sent to an institutional print shop or duplication department is much more economical in that it reduces the use of copiers by individual teachers. At our institution, the 1984 cost for materials sent to the print shop was approximately one cent per copy per page (as opposed to five cents per copy per page for materials produced by copiers). We reserve use of copiers for "emergency" situations or for fewer than twelve copies of a single item.

Another advantage is that the system encourages teachers to plan ahead since it takes about two weeks to send materials to the print shop, to have the materials returned to the department, and to put the materials into the system. The system also encourages creativity and use of teacher synthesizing/writing skills because our general policy for sending materials is that what is sent to the print shop is an original teacher-made item (work sheet, test, etc.) or an item that represents substantial adaptation or revision of another source. No materials copied directly from a commercial source are sent to the print shop.

With a department that is composed of a number of part-time teachers (including some new teachers), the system helps to orient teachers quickly regarding appropriate materials and helps to enable the program coordinator to hire new teachers as needed on short notice.

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The system also encourages within the faculty/staff a sense of sharing or contributing for the good of the whole department. This is especially important for programs in which most teachers work essentially part-time and have little contact with other teachers beyond planned staff development activities. A word of caution is necessary here in that some individuals may contribute more to the system than others. A program coordinator, however, can find other ways in which to recognize or reward these individuals. It is likely that individuals who are not "fair" to the system, in taking from it but never contributing to it, are generally those whose lack of commitment or dedication to the program may show up in other ways.

Incentives for Teacher Use

The advantages to the system may be closely related to the incentives for teacher use. The system is easy to use and not time consuming. The system is available and accessible whenever the college is open. The location of the system is adjacent to the GED Department office, and some work space is available near the files. The system saves everyone a great deal of time in not having to create a separate collection of his or her own individual materials. Donating materials is also a demonstrable contribution to the department and to the college that teachers can list on their yearly self-evaluation form.

Finally, perhaps the most important incentive for teacher use is that these are original materials appropriate to the level of his or her students. With materials coded according to suggested general level (Basic Skills, Pre-GED, or GED) and

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content area (writing skills, social studies, science, reading skills, mathematics) and with specific materials focused on the constitution test and self-guided GED study, the teacher can feel that he or she is doing a better job of tailoring instructional materials to the individual or the group.

Extent of Teacher Use

Of the three general content areas (reading, English, and mathematics), the English writing skills area is probably used to the greatest extent. These worksheets are used extensively by every instructor for each class session. It is especially important in this area because of the need to provide alternative class activities to the often-used commercial grammar/usage texts. Mathematics worksheets, especially for extra drill and practice, are also used quite often by the mathematics instructors.

Reading worksheets are used less often than the English or mathematics materials since classroom and supplementary textbooks (practical/general reading skills, literature, social studies, and science) often lend themselves better to reading instruction than teacher-made reading materials. One main reason for this is the extra concern for control of reading level, including vocabulary, necessary to produce appropriate reading passages. If written by instructors with particular reading training/ background, teacher made materials can be a valuable contribution to the collection. These types of materials, however, are best done as part of an actual curriculum materials project or assignment.

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When Harper College offered a Self-Guided GED Study Course held on three Saturdays, the teachers used the materials to a great extent. In experimenting with this option three times during the Spring, 1984 session, the Harper College GED Coordinator organized the course to include the following: a first week of study skills, mathematics assessment and instruction; a second week of writing skills and reading skills assessment and instruction; and a third week of social studies and science assessment and instruction and constitution review and testing.

With three instructors plus the GED Student Advisor taking part in this course, the GED Coordinator was at first supervising duplication and organization of materials for each instructor for each Saturday. It became time-consuming, but there was a need to "coordinate" since it was a "multiple" team-teaching situation. The solution seemed to be to turn the responsibility for materials back to the instructors. The self-guided materials were sent to the print shop for multiple copies to be made. These materials were added to the central materials system, and the instructors were given sample week-by-week packets. For future Self-Guided GED Study seminars, teachers could pull their own materials as needed.

Organization of the System

The system is organized into the three broad areas of reading, English, and mathematics. Each of these areas is set up by major skills or content areas. The individual worksheets are arranged behind each major skill or content section according to how they are generally taught: introduction, practice, review,

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and skill mastery quiz or testing. The worksheets are labelled at the bottom of the page with the location of the file drawer by number, section title, and folder label.

The folders of individual worksheets are labeled with a color dot, coded to a system to indicate suggested use. The "reasoning" for the system was green for GED level materials, thinking that students have the "green light" to sign up for the GED Test battery after completing the course; yellow for Pre-GED materials, thinking that these students should "proceed with caution" toward the GED test; and red for Basic Skills materials indicating to students to 'STOP' and not think in terms of taking the GED Test until their academic skills are improved.

The teacher is given a current list of teacher-made materials in the subject area of the teacher's assignment. This list is especially helpful for at-home teacher preparation. Following is a sample page (including all detail) from the English files. A complete listing of major headings (without detail) is included in the appendix to this paper.

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MATERIALS IN ENGLISH FILES

Drawer 3

Section Title		Folder Label
LOGIC AND ORGANIZATION MATERIALS		
LOGIC AND ORGANIZATION----	1.	Logic and Organization--7 pages 035 Level
	2.	Logic and Organization: Paragraph Development--2 pages 035 Level
CAPITALIZATION MATERIALS		
CAPITALIZATION----------	1.	Capitalization-Basic English--1 page - 035 Level
	2.	Capitalization: Capitalization Practice--1 page - 031 and 035 Levels
	3.	Capitalization Worksheet--2 pages 033 Level
	4.	Basic Rules of Capitalization--2 pages - 035 Level
	5.	Capitalization: pp. 1 - 2 of 4 pages--2 pages - 035 Level
	6.	Capitalization: p.3 of 4 pages--1 page - 035 Level
	7.	Capitalization: p.4 of 4 pages--1 page - 035 Level
	8.	Capitalization Practice--1 Page 035 Level
	9.	Capitalization Exercises--2 pages 033 and 035 Levels
	10.	Capitalization Practice (Business Letters) -- 033 and 035 Levels
	11.	Review: Capitalization--2 pages 035 Level
	12.	Review of Capitalization--1 page 035 Level
PUNCTUATION-----------	1.	Punctuation Rules--1 page 031 and 033 Levels
	2.	Punctuating Dialogue--1 page 035 Level
	3.	Punctuation Rules for Using Comma, Semicolon, Dash--2 pages 035 Level
END PUNCTUATION----------	4.	Punctuation: End Punctuation Worksheet--1 page - 031 and 033 Levels

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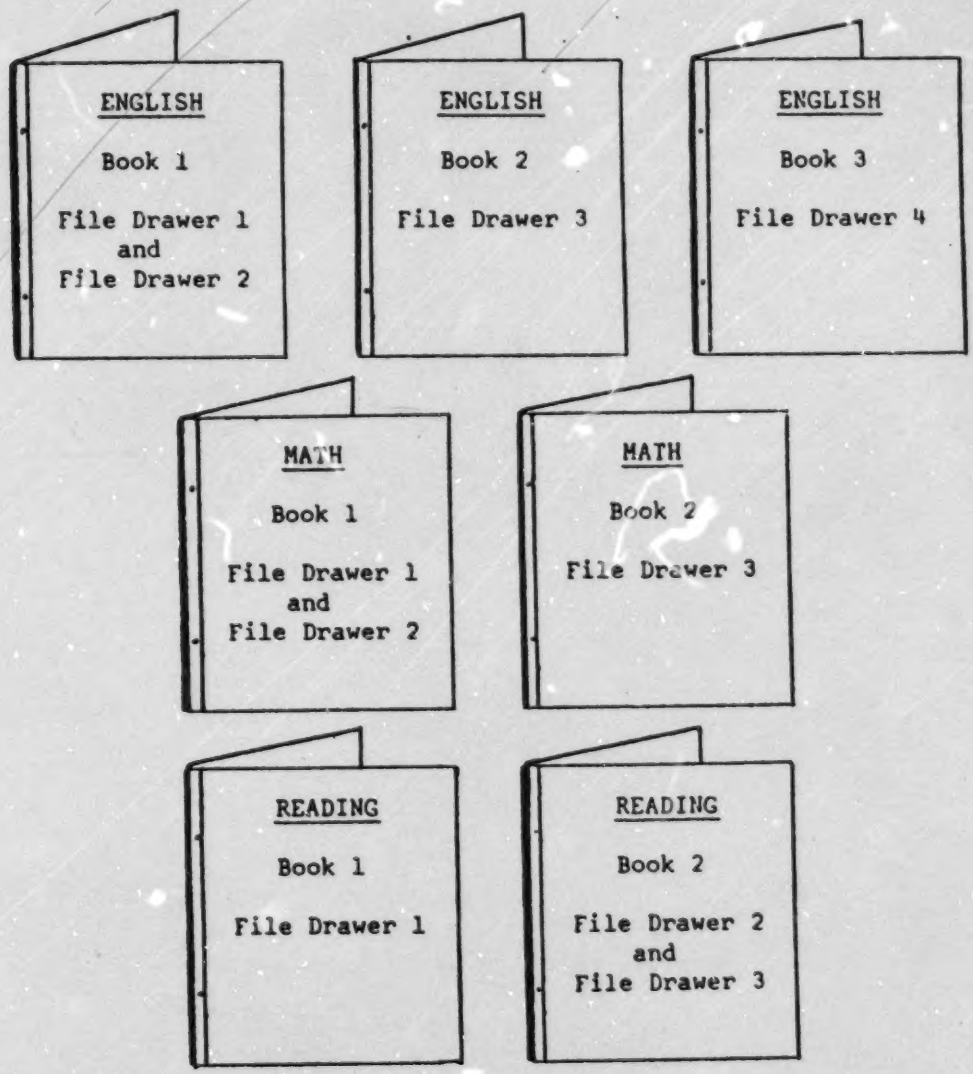
At the front of six large volumes is a complete listing of all materials found in the book and in the file drawers by file drawer number. (Every page showing sample materials is covered with plastic for durability.) The samples enable the teacher to preview the worksheet for appropriateness before actually pulling copies from the file drawers. The volumes located on a desk in the materials area are identified (correspond to the file drawers) as follows:



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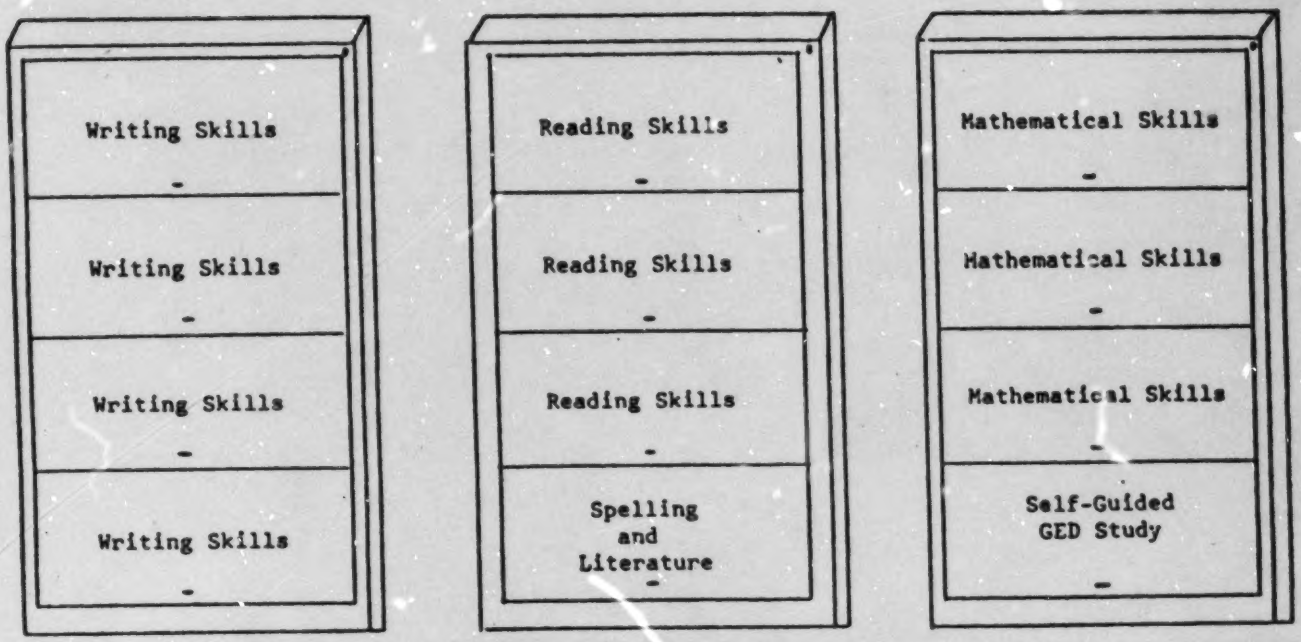
The actual multiple copies of the teacher-made materials are in separate file folders in several file cabinets. Current organization is as follows:



When new worksheets are added, teachers are sent a new listing which they can add to or incorporate into the original teacher-made list.

Maintenance of the System

Maintenance of a central teacher-made materials system depends upon the general cooperation of the teaching staff and upon one individual who oversees other needs of the system. The system depends upon teachers using the "re-order tray" located on top of the file cabinets in order to continue the flow of needed materials to the print shop. Teachers are instructed to place

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one copy in the tray of any particular worksheet of which approximately 25 copies remain in the file. The Materials Specialist (or designee) sends the materials to the print shop with a work order and files the multiple copies when they return.

Teachers may also submit original materials for typing (or revised materials for re-typing) to be sent to Word Processing. The Materials Specialist sends the materials with a work order and proofreads materials sent back to the GED Department. The Materials Specialist also proofreads all worksheets to be sure that all file information (level of instruction, file drawer number, section title, and folder label) has been typed on the front of the first page.

After initial organization, maintenance of the system including provision for revisions, is only an average of two hours per week. As new course descriptions are created or existing course descriptions revised, it is necessary to type the corresponding level of instruction on individual worksheets. As new materials are incorporated into the system, teachers in the respective content area need to be notified. Finally, files must be surveyed and unused materials must be discarded in order to maintain space for viable materials.

With an organization of a system for teacher-made materials in place, one last consideration is that two hours a week is probably too few to interest most paid staff members in a Materials Specialist position. One suggested way to enhance the position is to have the staff person also responsible for ordering and/or maintaining other program materials such as

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classroom or supplementary textbooks or supplying materials to teachers in outreach locations. You could undoubtedly think of other suitable combinations of instructional or clerical responsibilities for the Materials Specialist.

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Appendix A
Complete Lists of Major File Headings
in English, Reading, and Mathematics

MATERIALS IN ENGLISH FILES

Drawer 1

G.E.D. Test Taking Techniques

Skills Checklist-English

Parts of Speech Materials

Parts of Speech

Nouns

Pronoun Usage

Verbs

Verb Usage

Adjectives

Adverbs

Adjectives and Adverbs

Modification-Adjectives and Adverb Usage

Prepositions

Conjunctions

Drawer 2

Parts of Speech Practice

Parts of Speech Quizzes

Sentence Structure Materials

The Sentence-Parts of

Parts of the Sentence Quiz

Subject-Verb Agreement

Sentence Fragments

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Drawer 2 (con't)

Phrases and Clauses

Verbals

Drawer 3

Style and Clarity Materials

Style and Clarity

Logic and Organization Materials

Logic and Organization

Capitalization Materials

Capitalization

Punctuation Materials

Punctuation

End Punctuation

The Comma

Apostrophe

Quotation Marks

Capitalization and Punctuation

Grammar and Usage Review and Tests (Materials)

Grammar and Usage Review and Tests

Drawer 4

Spelling Materials

Spelling

Spelling Tests

Pronounciation Materials

Pronounciation

Literature Materials

Literature

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MATERIALS IN READING FILES

Drawer 1

Reading Skills Checklist

Graded Work List

Reading Study Skills: SQ3R Method

Reading Tests Available in A.B.E.

G.E.D. Test Taking Techniques

Analyzing What You Read--General Reading

Fact vs. Opinion

Inferring Meanings

Interpreting What You Read

Literal vs. Figurative Meaning

Logical Relationships

Sequencing

Perceiving Relationships: Relevancy and Irrelevancy

Skimming and Scanning

Study Skills

Detecting an Author's Purpose

Main Idea

Making Comparisons

Drawing Conclusions

Reading for a Purpose

Writing Subheads and Titles for an Article

Drawer 2

Prefixes

Suffixes

Roots, Prefixes, Suffixes

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Drawer 2 (con't)

Vocabulary Exercises

Multiple Meanings

Context Clues

Constitution

Comparison of Federal and State Government

U.S. Constitution Facts

Constitution Quizzes

Reading Newspapers and Editorials

Using the Library

Social Studies

Social Studies-Maps, Charts, Graphs

Drawer 3

Science

G.E.D. Science Test Content Areas

The Atom

Blood

Blood Types

Chemical Reactions

Digestive System

Earth's Atmosphere

Genetics

The Heart

Nutrition

States of Matter

Various Science Concepts

General Science Vocabulary

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MATERIALS IN MATHEMATICS FILES

Drawer 1

G.E.D. Math Placement Examination

G.E.D. Math Skills

Prime and Composite Numbers

Reading and Writing Whole Numbers

Roman Numerals

Multiplication

Division

Multiplication and Division

Word Problems

Averaging

Averaging Word Problems

Fractions-Explanation of Terms

Fractions-Reducing

Addition of Like Fractions

Addition of Unlike Fractions

Addition of Unlike Fractions (con't)

Substraction of Unlike Fractions with "borrowing"

Addition and Substraction of Like and Unlike Fractions

Multiplication of Fractions

Multiplication and Division of Fractions

Fractions-Word Problems Involving + - x -

Drawer 2

Review of Fractions

Decimals

Metric System

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Drawer 2 (con't)

Percent

Estimating Answers

Units of Measurements

Ratio and Proportion

Drawer 3

Algebra--Signed Numbers Addition

Signed Numbers-Subtraction

Signed Numbers-Multiplication

Signed Numbers-Division

Review-Signed Numbers

Coefficients

Parentheses

Combining Like Terms Algebra Addition

Substitution

Multiplication of Algebraic Fractions

Quotients of 2 Monomials

Equation Explanation

Equations

Transposition of Equations

Exponents

Algebra Word Problems

Square Root

Math Review

G.E.D. Geometry

Appendix B

MATERIALS SELECTION CRITERIA

Adult Education Need	Accomplishing Feature
1. Adult subject interest/life relevancy/attention to life tasks (e.g. establishing home, job/career, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving)	Adult tone in vocabulary, ideas, illustrations, charts, graphs, cartoons, etc. Reinforcement of skills in other content areas Variety in writing style
2. Satisfaction of a hierarchy of needs from basic survival to enrichment	Variety of content: life coping skills; references to literature, art, music, etc.
3. Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses; "benchmarks of progress"	Diagnostic tests Pre-tests Skills/subskills mastery tests Programmed instructional frames/answers Skill items analyses/charts Post-tests Predictive tests (GED)
4. Adult readability/format	Controlled readability: syllable length, sentence length, vocabulary, clause structure Suitable print size, typeface Margins, white space Appropriate graphics Clear organization: directions, major headings, sub-headings, examples, exercises, tables of contents, indexes, glossaries Controlled length of exercises, chapters, book
5. Promotion of student motivation, confidence, self-directedness, interest in lifelong learning	Sequence of instruction Self-explanatory exercises Self-scoring answer keys Student interpretive skills charts Optional other student suggestions, assignments Remediation, development, or reinforcement of skills

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About the Author

Patricia Mulcrone is currently Assistant Professor/GED Coordinator at William Rainey Harper College, Palatine, Illinois. Ms. Mulcrone has served as the program coordinator at Harper College since 1978, was an instructor of GED English and reading at the college from 1975-1979, and was an instructor of high school English and journalism from 1965-1973. Her professional training includes a C.A.S. in Adult Education and an M.A. in Journalism from Northern Illinois University and a B.A. in the Teaching of English from the University of Illinois.

Ms. Mulcrone has been involved with the field of adult education by serving as current Editor of IACEA newsletter Keeping Pace, a member of the Setting the Pace editorial board, and as a previous Chair of the HSC/GED Section of IACEA. Her workshop presentations have included areas such as appropriate teaching models, Pre-GED instruction for Limited English Proficiency students, program newsletters, and student support services.

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Patricia Mulcrone wishes to thank Jack Moss of the NAAESC staff for his invitation and suggestions to create this topic. Patricia Mulcrone also wishes to thank Harper College adjunct reading instructor Eileen Brown (GED Department Materials Specialist) for her contribution of ideas to this paper.

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